

## AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims 1, 2, 4 - 7, 9, 11, 12, 14 – 17, and 19, as follows.

1. (Currently Amended) A machine-implemented method for managing access to data, the method comprising the steps of:  
 detecting that a database ~~command~~statement is issued;  
 wherein said database ~~command~~statement requires access to at least one column in a  
         table;  
 invoking a policy function which database metadata associates with at least one  
         column in a table;  
 receiving an expression returned by invoking said policy function;  
 rewriting said database ~~command~~statement by creating a modified database  
         ~~command~~statement that incorporates said expression;  
 wherein the modified database ~~command~~statement specifies, based on the expression,  
         whether to mask a value of the at least one column by returning a mask of the  
         value instead of the value; and  
 executing said modified database ~~command~~statement.
  
2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1,  
 wherein said database ~~command~~statement requests at least two values located in at  
         least two columns;  
 wherein each of the two values are located in a different one of the at least two  
         columns; and  
 wherein the step of executing the modified database ~~command~~statement includes at  
         least  
 returning at least one of the at least two values, and  
 returning a masked value instead of at least a second of the at least two values.

3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the expression is a condition expression.
4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the masked value is returned for rows that are retrieved for the database ~~command~~statement issued, that do not satisfy the condition, and to which access privileges are granted.
5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising: wherein said database metadata associates a list of one or more columns with a policy used for controlling access to the one or more columns; and wherein the step of rewriting is performed if a match is found between the at least one column to which the database ~~command~~statement requires access and the list of one or more columns.
6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein: said database metadata associates a list of one or more columns with a policy used for controlling access to the one or more columns; and the step of rewriting said database ~~command~~statement by creating a modified database ~~command~~statement is not performed if a match is not found between the list of one or more columns and the at least one column to which the database ~~command~~statement requires access.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
creating the policy function that returns a condition expression;  
wherein the step of creating the modified database ~~command~~statement includes  
incorporating the condition expression and the database ~~command~~statement  
into the modified database ~~command~~statement.
8. (Original) The method of claim 7, further comprising:  
creating a policy referencing the policy function and specifying trigger columns that  
trigger implementing the policy.
9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising registering the  
policy function with a database server, wherein the policy function returns a condition  
expression and the modified database ~~command~~statement is based on the condition  
expression.
10. (Cancelled)
11. (Currently Amended) A machine-readable medium carrying one or more sequences  
of instructions, which when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or  
more processors to perform a method comprising the steps of:  
detecting that a database ~~command~~statement is issued;  
wherein said database ~~command~~statement requires access to at least one column in a  
table;  
invoking a policy function which database metadata associates with at least one  
column in a table;  
receiving an expression returned by invoking said policy function;

rewriting said database ~~command~~statement by creating a modified database ~~command~~statement that incorporates said expression;  
 wherein the modified database ~~command~~statement specifies, based on the expression,  
 whether to mask a value of the at least one column by returning a mask of the  
 value instead of the value; and  
 executing said modified database ~~command~~statement.

12. (Currently Amended) The machine readable medium of claim 1,  
 wherein said database ~~command~~statement requests at least two values located in at  
 least two columns;  
 wherein each of the two values are located in a different one of the at least two  
 columns; and  
 wherein the step of executing the modified database ~~command~~statement includes at  
 least  
 returning at least one of the at least two values, and  
 returning a masked value instead of at least a second of the at least two values.
13. (Previously Presented) The machine-readable medium of claim 1,  
 wherein the expression is a condition expression.
14. (Currently Amended) The machine-readable medium of claim 1, wherein the masked  
 value is returned for rows  
 that are retrieved for the database ~~command~~statement issued,  
 that do not satisfy the condition, and  
 to which access privileges are granted.

15. (Currently Amended) The machine-readable medium of claim 1,  
Wherein said database metadata associates a list of one or more columns with a  
policy used for controlling access to the one or more columns; and  
wherein the step of rewriting is performed if a match is found between the at least one  
column to which the database ~~command~~statement requires access and the list  
of one or more columns.
16. (Currently Amended) The machine-readable medium of claim 1, wherein:  
said database metadata associates a list of one or more columns with a policy used for  
controlling access to the one or more columns; and  
the step of rewriting said database ~~command~~statement by creating a modified  
database ~~command~~statement is not performed if a match is not found between  
the list of one or more columns and the at least one column to which the  
database ~~command~~statement requires access.
17. (Currently Amended) The machine-readable medium of claim 1, wherein the steps  
further comprise  
creating the policy function that returns a condition expression;  
wherein the step of creating the modified database ~~command~~statement includes  
incorporating the condition expression and the database ~~command~~statement  
into the modified database ~~command~~statement.
18. (Previously Presented) The machine-readable medium of claim 7, wherein the steps  
further comprise creating a policy referencing the policy function and specifying  
trigger columns that trigger implementing the policy.

19. (Currently Amended). The machine-readable medium of claim 1, wherein the steps further comprise registering the policy function with a database server, wherein the policy function returns a condition expression and the modified database ~~command~~statement is based on the condition expression.
20. (Cancelled)